

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY MAPUTO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7236

INFO AMEMBASSY BISSAU

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMEMBASSY GABORONE

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

AMEMBASSY MBABANE

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 MAPUTO 0958

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, PINT, MZ

SUBJECT: LEADERSHIP IN MOZAMBIQUE THREE YEARS AFTER INDEPENDENCE

1. SUMMARY. WITH THE UNQUESTIONED BACKING OF THE PARTY AND THE LOYALTY OF THE MILITARY, MACHEL CONTINUES TO DOMINATE THE MOZAMBI-CAN SCENE. THERE HAS BEEN LITTLE CHANGE IN THE RANKS OF THE 20-30 FRELIMO LEADERS WHO RUN THE COUNTRY. WHILE FIRMLY SET ON A MARXIST-LENINIST COURSE, THE GOVERNMENT IS NOT A PRISONER OF EITHER IDEOLOGY OR THE EAST. THERE IS A HEALTHY STREAK OF PRAG-MATISM AND NATIONAL SELF-INTEREST IN WHAT IT DOES. WE EXPECT THIS TO CONTINUE. END SUMMARY.

2. THERE HAS BEEN ALMOST NO CHANGE IN THE MAKEUP OF THE MOZAM-BICAN LEADERSHIP IN THE THREE YEARS SINCE INDEPENDENCE. THERE HAS BEEN NEITHER A PURGE NOR EMERGENCE OF NEW FACES. DE-CONFIDENTIAL

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CISIONS ARE STILL MADE LARGELY BY 20-30 KEY FRELIMO LEADERS, MOST OF WHOM ARE PRODUCTS OF THE GUERRILLA STRUGGLE. FAILURE TO DELEGATE AUTHORITY HAS SERIOUSLY SLOWED DECISION-MAKING TO THE DETRIMENT OF THE MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE ECONOMY, BUT THERE IS NO EVIDENCE THAT FRELIMO IS AS YET READY TO BROADEN THE REINS OF GOVERNMENT.

3. MACHEL CONTINUES TO DOMINATE THE GOVERNMENT. THE EMBASSY KNOWS OF NO INSTANCE WHERE AN IMPORTANT DECISION WAS REACHED CONTRARY TO HIS WISHES. MARCILINO DOS SANTOS AND JOACHIM CHISSANO, NUMBER TWO AND THREE IN THE PARTY, SEEM TO HAVE LOST GROUND. DOS SANTOS REMAINS THE PARTY IDEOLOGUE BUT NO LONGER HAS AN IMPORTANT DAY-TO-DAY ROLE IN ADMINISTERING THE PARTY. THIS HAS FALLEN TO MINISTER OF STATE OSCAR MONTEIRO. CHISSANO, WHO WAS IN THE PARTY DOGHOUSE A YEAR AGO, HAS RE-ESTABLISHED HIMSELF IN THE PARTY, BUT GIVES THE IMPRESSION OF BEING WARY OF HIS STANDING. ALSO, HE HAS DONE LITTLE TO LIVE UP TO HIS EARLIER REPUTATION OF BEING THE PARTY "MODERATE." ON THE CONTRARY, CHISSANO IS ONE OF MOZAMBIQUE'S MORE CAUSTIC CRITICS OF THE WEST.

4. THE CABINET, CENTRAL COMMITTEE AND NEWLY-FORMED PEOPLE'S ASSEMBLY COUNT FOR LITTLE. DECISIONS ARE INCREASINGLY MADE BY MACHEL IN CONSULTATION WITH AD HOC GROUPS OF THREE TO SIX PEOPLE. THE COMPOSITION OF THESE GROUPS VARIES, BUT CERTAIN INDIVIDUALS WITH DRIVE AND PROVEN ABILITY, SUCH AS SERGIO VIEIRA, OSCAR MONTEIRO, JORGE REBELO, MARIO MACHUNGO, JOACHIM CARVALHO AND JOSE CABACO, FIGURE MORE PROMINENTLY THAN OTHERS. SERGIO VIEIRA IS PARTICULARLY CLOSE TO MACHEL AND HAS COME TO PLAY KEY ROLES WITH RESPECT TO RELATIONS WITH SOUTH AFRICA, ZIMBABWE, INTERNAL SECURITY, AND OVERALL ECONOMIC PLANNING AND ADMINISTRATION.

5. UP TO NOW THE GOVERNMENT'S POLICIES AND ACTIONS APPEAR TO BE BASED LARGELY ON FOUR CONSIDERATIONS:
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A. INTERNAL SECURITY. AFTER THE SETTLER CHALLENGE OF SEPTEMBER 1974 AND THE ARMY MUTINY IN DECEMBER 1975, FRELIMO HAD GOOD REASON TO BE CONCERNED ABOUT INTERNAL SECURITY. RHODESIAN SUPPORT FOR OPPOSITION ELEMENTS AND RAIDS ACROSS THE BORDER HAVE CONTINUED TO GIVE THE REGIME CAUSE FOR CONCERN. BUT TENSIONS HAVE EASED: WHAT LITTLE DISSIDENCE EXISTS IS LARGELY CONFINED TO THE NORTH AND POSES NO THREAT TO THE REGIME. HOWEVER, SUSPICIONS OF SABOTAGE AND SUBVERSION CONTINUE. MACHEL WATCHES HIS MILITARY FORCES CLOSELY AND MAKES CERTAIN THAT THEY HAVE LITTLE CAUSE FOR COMPLAINT INsofar AS SCHOOLING FOR DEPENDENTS AND FOOD IS CONCERNED.

B. FRELIMO'S GUERRILLA EXPERIENCE. TO UNDERSTAND MACHEL AND THE PARTY, ONE MUST APPRECIATE THE IMPORTANCE OF THE GUERRILLA STRUGGLE. AMONG OTHER THINGS, IT EXPLAINS THE REGIME'S FERVID SUPPORT FOR LIBERATION STRUGGLES ELSEWHERE AND THE WARM TIES THAT EXIST BETWEEN MOZAMBIQUE AND THOSE NATIONS, ORGANIZATIONS AND INDIVIDUALS WHO HELPED FRELIMO DURING ITS GUERRILLA STRUGGLE. "THESE FRIENDS," SAYS MACHEL, "WILL NEVER BE FORGOTTEN." THE GUERRILLA EXPERIENCE ALSO HELPS EXPLAIN THE REGIME'S PROCLIVITY FOR SECRETIVENESS, ITS REQUALITARIANISM AND THE CAMARADEIRE OF ITS LEADERSHIP.

C. IDEOLOGY. AT ITS THIRD PARTY CONGRESS IN FEBRUARY 1977,

FRELIMO DECLARED ITSELF TO BE A MARXIST-LENINIST PARTY. IT WOULD BE A MISTAKE NOT TO TAKE THIS COMMITMENT TO MARXISM-LENINISM SERIOUSLY. THE MOZAMBICANS DO. WHILE MANY WITHIN THE PARTY MAY HAVE LITTLE IDEA OF WHAT MARXISM-LENINISM IS ALL ABOUT, A HARD CORE ARE STEEPED IN MARXISM, AND THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT THE PARTY LEADERSHIP SEEKS TO BASE ITS OVERALL POLICY AND ACTIONS ON MARXISM. WE SEE NO SLACKENING OF THIS COMMITMENT.

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D. DEDICATION TO DEVELOPMENT. THERE IS A STRONG FEELING OF OUTRAGE AGAINST THE PORTUGUESE FOR CENTURIES OF COLONIAL NEGLECT. THE GOVERNMENT IS DETERMINED TO REMOVE ALL VESTIGES OF COLONIALISM, TO MEET BASIC HUMAN NEEDS AND TO BUILD AN EQUALITARIAN SOCIETY. MOZAMBIQUE IS NOT UNIQUE IN THIS RESPECT. OBSERVERS WHO COME TO MOZAMBIQUE, HOWEVER, SUGGEST THAT THERE MAY BE A DIFFERENCE-- THAT, FOR WHATEVER REASON OR COMBINATION OF REASONS, FRELIMO LEADERS SEEM SOMEWHAT MORE DEDICATED AND SOMEWHAT MORE CONVINCING. THUS FAR, THEY HAVE DISDAINED PERSONAL GAIN AND REMAINED REMARKABLY FREE OF CORRUPTION IN PURSUIT OF THEIR GOALS. WHETHER THEY WILL BE ANY MORE SUCCESSFUL THAN OTHER DEVELOPING COUNTRIES IN ACHIEVING THEM, HOWEVER, IS TOO EARLY TO TELL.

6. MACHEL AND THE MOZAMBICAN LEADERSHIP HAVE LEARNED MUCH IN

THE THREE YEARS THEY HAVE HELD POWER. AMONG OTHER THINGS, THEY
AR NOW MUCH MORE AWARE OF THE ENORMITY OF THE ECONOMIC PROBLEMS
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THEY FACE. THEY REALIZE TOO THAT STRICT ADHERENCE TO PRINCIPLES
OF MARXISM-LENINISM AND CLOSE RELATIONS WITH OTHER MARXIST-
LENINIST GOVERNMENTS ARE NOT NECESSARILY THE SUREST OR QUICKEST
WAY OF SATISFYING THE COUNTRY'S URGENT NEED FOR FOOD, RAW MA-
TERIALS, FOREIGN EXCHANGE AND JOBS. THEY HAVE SHOWN THAT THEY ARE
QUITE PREPARED TO SACRIFICE--OR DEFER--IDEOLOGY FOR THE SAKE
OF EXPEDIENCY. THIS IS EVIDENT IN THE RELATIONS THE GOVERNMENT
MAINTAINS WITH SOUTH AFRICA AND THE EFFORTS IT IS MAKING TO DE-
VELOP CLOSER COMMERCIAL RELATIONS WITH THE WEST. AS THE YUGOSLAV
AMBASSADOR RECENTLY PUT IT, "MOZAMBIQUE IS NOT A PRISONER OF
DOGMA." AS MORE AND MORE HARD CHOICES HAVE TO BE MADE, WE EXPECT
MOZAMBIQUE WILL CONTINUE ON MANY OCCASIONS TO OPT FOR PRAGMA-
TISM OVER IDEOLOGY.

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